



A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO SHARING THE INSPIRATION AND SUCCESS STORIES THAT SURROUND US AT ASPIRE

FALL | 2015

NEW VISIONS

New Center for Learning Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Before taking part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony to unveil the newly renovated Center for Learning (CFL), student DaShawn Bonner used his communication device to convey what the completed facility means to him and his fellow students.

“The new sensory room is great, and I enjoy being able to eat lunch with my friends in the new cafeteria,” he explained. “Everything about it, provides us with a wonderful place to learn.”

“And I love having a stage for my performances!” He added with a smile.

Joining DaShawn in cutting the ribbon was Aspire of WNY’s President and CEO, Tom Sy, Aspire’s VP of Educational Services, Cathleen Voyer, and members of the Aspire Capital Campaign Committee.



The CFL’s new therapy track.

On September 29th, from 4 pm to 7 pm, the largest capital project in Aspire’s nearly 70-year history was unveiled to the public. Parents, friends, supporters, and assembled dignitaries toured the renovated and expanded CFL.



DaShawn Bonner talking about how much he enjoys the new school.

Once inside, visitors witnessed the new therapy rooms, the important technology that is now available in every classroom, the sparkling new combination Cafeteria/Auditorium, called the Cafetorium, and so much more. In addition to the renovations, the project included an additional 20,000 square feet of space and a new heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system. This environmental upgrade ensures that all of our students can learn and thrive in a consistently comfortable environment.

Every visitor that navigated the expanded hallways left knowing that Aspire of WNY is the proud owner of the crown-jewel of educational facilities for pre-school and school age students with disabilities. The Center for Learning will continue thriving for many years to come in providing state-of-the-art therapies and educational services for their students.

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One-of-a-kind services for one-of-a-kind people.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Thomas Sy



Fall often seems like a season of celebration, and that certainly was the case for Aspire this year. We proudly celebrated the opening of our renovated and expanded Center for Learning in September. This facility is an agency defining facility and will ensure the continued top notch educational services provided by Aspire.

September is, of course, Art & Wine celebration month, at least for the past 12 years at Aspire. This event highlights the paintings and related products created by the *iXpress* artists and is a great celebration of the abilities and talents of those we serve. If you have yet to join us for this signature event, put it on your calendar next year as you won't be disappointed.

For years, I have commented about the challenging economic environment not-for-profit human service organizations must

operate in. This type of economic climate creates stress on organizations and often leads to discussions on collaboration. On October 1st, Aspire and SKIP of NY elected to collaborate on the transfer of service coordination performed in their Buffalo office from SKIP to Aspire. We welcome the wonderful individuals and families to Aspire and equally welcome the former SKIP Medicaid Service Coordinators along with their skill and passion for their families.

If you have yet to friend us on Facebook, do so soon and become one of our 3000 followers. Enjoy the video we posted on the Facebook site (under the "More" tab) celebrating 2500 likes.

Thomas Sy
President and CEO

SAVE THE DATE!

ASPIRE OF WNY'S

SKI

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2016
12PM – 6PM
HOLIDAY VALLEY RESORT
MAIN LODGE
ELLICOTTVILLE, NY**

THE Valley

PRESENTED BY
Independent Health
Dedicated to
Making a Difference

To learn more, go to
www.aspirewny.org

**LIFT TICKET
VALID ALL DAY!**

Did You Know?

The Aspire of WNY Health Center, located at 7 Community Drive in Cheektowaga, offers a full range of medical services in a caring, patient-centered environment. As experts in providing health care for individuals with varying abilities, the Aspire Health Center is your



The Aspire of WNY Health Center provides broad health care services to individuals with disabilities and the general community.

perfect choice for primary and specialty care services. At the Health Center, you or your loved one will receive a comprehensive health assessment and total care management in a supportive effort to improve and maintain wellness. Also, the Health Center offers Mental Health Services provided by on staff Neurologists and Psychologists. Comprehensive Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapies are offered on-site by an experienced therapy team working in concert with primary care providers to develop inclusive care plans. For all of your Health and Wellness needs, consider a visit to the trusted professionals at the Aspire Health Center. For more information on Aspire Health Care Services, contact the Patient Services team at 716-505-5630.

ENGAGE NURTURE THRIVE

ANOTHER STELLAR ART & WINE CELEBRATION

On Friday, September 11th, more than 800 guests gathered at Aspire's Administrative Offices in Getzville, for the 12th Annual Art & Wine Celebration presented by KeyBank. With Universal Mind providing a magnificent soundtrack for the evening, attendees sampled beer and a variety of wines. They also enjoyed culinary fare from several local eateries, including Lloyd's, Wegmans, Embers, and Theodore's Red Hots.

The Art & Wine Celebration is an annual event recognizing the amazing artistic contributions made by members of Aspire's *iXpress* Arts Program, throughout the year. The event was made possible through the generous support of KeyBank, Lawley, Accessium Group, Dopkins & Company, as well as Master Circle Sponsors Hover Networks, Independent Health, Janet Hansen, and the Brett Eller Family. Several paintings, carefully selected and donated by *iXpress* artists, were included in the always exciting live Auction, emceed once again by WGRZ's Scott Levin.

"I've been doing this event for at least the past five years," explained Levin to the event attendees. "And I have to tell you, this is by far my favorite event of the year. These artists are so talented, and it is always a great time."



Eric Kurek and Jenna Pantaro enjoy the Art & Wine Celebration.

Funds raised through sponsorship, the auction, *iXpress* store sales, and event ticket sales all go towards continuing support of *iXpress*, an innovative, expressive arts program for individuals with a full range of abilities. Participants, working with Aspire Art Facilitators, create works of art in a variety of media. They also

create poetry and music, and their work has been presented at major venues throughout Western New York, including Burchfield-Penney Art Center and U.B. Center for the Arts.

"This event truly highlights just how talented these amazing artists really are," exclaimed a smiling Sue Barlow, Executive Director of WNY Parent Network.

NOTE: Artists who participate in Southern Tier *iXpress* recently had a show at the Octagon Gallery, located at the Patterson Library in Westfield throughout the month of October. In addition, beginning November 19th, *iXpress* artists have created photo collages to be displayed for one year at the new Coventus Building, located at the Allen Medical Campus in downtown Buffalo. The collages were inspired by the building's aesthetic, the four seasons, and the mission of the Coventus Building tenants.



Auctioneer and Channel 2 Anchor Scott Levin directs the bidding for the Live Auction.



Brett Eller and his father, Mark, carefully monitor bidding on one of Brett's paintings.

Get Social!



"Like" us on [facebook.com/AspireWNY](https://www.facebook.com/AspireWNY). We're dedicated to posting information about upcoming events and activity photos on a regular basis.



Follow us @AspireWNY to get Aspire news updates, information on programming and upcoming events!



Subscribe to the *iXpressAspireWNY* channel on YouTube to see more of these amazing art exhibitions.

If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, please call (716) 505-5510 and request to be removed from our mailing list. Thank you!

Aspire of WNY
www.aspirewny.org
716-505-5500

Thomas A. Sy, President/CEO

Mission

Aspire's mission is to support children and adults with developmental and similar disabilities, helping them to live their lives to the fullest by providing individualized assistance based on personal choices.

Vision

Aspire is the region's leader in supporting individuals with disabilities. We envision full participation of those we support in all aspects of community living. Toward that end, Aspire empowers individuals to maximize their potential, including those we support, those who work for us and those who work with us.

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Aspire of WNY Assimilates SKIP of NY's Service Coordination

In September, Aspire of WNY entered into a collaboration to assume all of the Service Coordination for individuals and families receiving services through SKIP of NY. SKIP is a New York City-based agency with five offices throughout New York State, including the Buffalo office. Locally, SKIP provided OPWDD service coordination for over 230 individuals. The collaboration with Aspire effectively ends SKIP's role as a service coordinator locally. However, the agency will continue providing care-at-home services.

Aspire recruited, interviewed and hired six Medicaid Service Coordinators (MSC) and one Supervisor, who were working for SKIP service coordination. Each of these SKIP employees came to Aspire as quality providers with an excellent track record of service to those they have supported.

"In this day and age, more agencies are exploring collaborations like this," explained Tom SY, President and CEO for Aspire of WNY. "We are thrilled to expand our opportunities to support more individuals, and because our MSC operation is so well run, we were confident that we could take on this additional work and provide a seamless transition for the SKIP clients."

As the transition was announced, Aspire held informational sessions for the SKIP families informing them about the breadth of services that Aspire provides. These meetings served to alleviate any concerns that SKIP families may have had and, in effect, turned the transition into a positive experience for them.

"I am really proud of how well our MSC team and the new staff handled the transition," stated Mary Anne Coombe, Aspire's VP of Service Coordination and Fiscal Mgt Services. "We welcomed them with open arms and they very quickly adjusted to our processes and procedures."

SAVE THE DATE FOR ASPIRE'S 2016 EVENTS

26th Annual Going for the Green Golf Tournament

PRESENTED BY DOPKINS & COMPANY, LLP

Monday, June 6 • Brookfield Country Club, Clarence, NY

5th Annual Art at the Athenaeum

PRESENTED BY KEYBANK

Friday, June 24 • Athenaeum Hotel, Chautauqua, NY

Art & Wine Celebration

PRESENTED BY KEYBANK

Friday, September 9 • Aspire Offices, Getzville, NY